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Why Afterschool Programs?

T he agreement is clear that students need supervision and learning opportunities during the afterschool hours, but exactly what activities to engage in and why is a large topic of debate among the very parties that agree that a need exists. Until now, the phrases *child care,* or *afterschool care,* and *school-age child care,* have intentionally not been used because these terms represent an entirely different school of thought from academically oriented afterschool programs. This is not to say that academically oriented afterschool programs are not concerned about issues such as safety, but, rather, their focus is mainly on creating afterschool programs that will enhance and improve learning opportunities for children. This book seeks to go beyond the topic of child care versus afterschool care, and address effective, academically based afterschool programs. First, though, it is important to attempt to shed some light on the topic of afterschool versus child care.

School-age child care and afterschool programs have similar concerns about children, on the one hand, and yet are very different, on the other hand; and although they can serve similar populations, they represent two different schools of thought. The similarities between the two entities lie in the students that they serve and their concerns for adequate supervision. For example, school-age child care (SACC) programs serve students in Grades K-3, and afterschool programs also serve students in this same population. A big distinction between the two entities, however, is the word *licensing.* This word lies at the heart of many of the afterschool and school-age child care debates that take place on a daily basis. To understand these debates, it is important to understand the reasons behind the various schools of thought and to remember that the children are at the heart of the debate.

It is important to make certain distinctions between the purposes of early childhood education (ECE) centers and academically based afterschool programs housed in public school buildings, with public school teachers providing the services to the children. ECE centers or sometimes day care centers, are state-licensed facilities created to provide supervised care for preschool-age children. Some centers are licensed for infants, and others have special licensing to provide child care for school-age children up to third grade (SACC centers). In addition to this, some centers, which have academic goals for their students, op-

erate as preschool programs as opposed to only child care programs, but centers that operate as preschool programs mainly educate non-school-age children.

Most of these centers do not operate in a public school setting but, rather, in homes or in buildings other than public schools. The buildings must pass inspection by state licensing agencies that will allow them to operate in these facilities. Many of the educators have different sets of credentials they must adhere to in order to work in these centers. Once again, the main reason for the different requirements is that the students are not of school age, and the teachers are not credentialed to the same degree or nature as credentialed public school teachers are.

If early childhood education centers choose to serve older children (up to Grade 3) during the nonschool hours, they are still required to adhere to ECE standards and licensing regulations. But the license is really to run a business, which is a school-age child care business or the day care business operated by a private entity. Licensing laws for these businesses have been created by state licensing agencies, and additional standards and guidelines are created and endorsed by organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National School-Age Child Care Alliance (NSACCA), and other organizations that address these issues. These organizations address the private programs that provide child care and create standards that serve as guides that other programs providing similar services should follow.

Public schools that offer preschools also adhere to the standards as they relate to the age of the children. This means that if there is a preschool-age population being served in a public school, teachers delivering the services are expected to adhere to the state ECE licensing standards. In addition, the facilities that the children use on a daily basis must meet these standards.

The big issue of concern and sometimes contention, however, is between public schools offering afterschool programs and private programs offering afterschool care services. The philosophies behind many of these programs differ, as do the buildings in which they are held. It is sometimes perceived by the non-ECE group that the standards governing the running of the afterschool programs should differ. Those from the afterschool school of thought believe that these standards are helpful guidelines that could be useful but should not be mandatory for public schools, whereas those from the SACC school of thought believe that the standards should be mandatory for all entities providing afterschool services whether they are public or private. Many of the afterschool programs run in public schools are run by public school teachers who already have certification for teaching school-age children. In addition, many of these programs are operated in school buildings, and so whether they are required to adhere to the standards of noncertified teachers and nonpublic schools is questionable because the public afterschool programs already exceed the standards for private programs, especially if these programs are offered by public school teachers.

Now, many of the ECE standards are positive, as they speak to issues of safety and care of students. However, the relationship or the differences between day care and child care programs offered for students by private entities and by public schools must be made clear. As was previously mentioned, the standards address issues related to the staffing, environmental safety, and general safety of the students.

To SACC centers offering afterschool care during the afterschool hours, these standards must be a requirement. For public schools offering afterschool programs, the standards offer good suggestions, but one must remember that the staffing and certification of the teachers in the public schools vary from and often overrule those for private-school teachers, even during the afterschool hours.

Having said this, we also realize that many school-based afterschool programs hire and train community-based volunteers or staff members to actually lead the nonacademic classes. If students are left alone with nonpublic school certified personnel at any point, then it is best that individual personnel be required to adhere to licensing requirements. If this is a difficult goal, then the schools must be sure to have a certified teacher in the presence of the volunteer at all times. Given all the controversy surrounding afterschool programs versus child care and the various schools of thought surrounding the concerns, one still cannot dispute the fact that the safety and welfare of the children are what drive this new focus on afterschool programs. This discussion leads to the topic of why afterschool programs are offered.

The hours 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and sometimes 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. are a time in which parents and primary caretakers of children aged 3 to 18, and sometimes from birth to age 18, are concerned about the well-being of their children. For parents of school-age children, once school is dismissed, opportunities for children's involvement in undesirable behaviors increase. However, these hours are seen by some groups, such as educators, as prime time—not only to keep children safe and out of trouble but also to provide them with help in areas of need. Some of these areas include academics, recreation, social skills, and behavior.

The creation of 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) and afterschool funding by foundations, legislation, school districts, and community-based organizations addresses not only a need for afterschool programs but also provides access to services for a large number of students who would otherwise not be able to afford them. The need for afterschool programs cuts across all demographic groups, and this is evident in responses to polls and surveys given by the Mott Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education (Mott Foundation, 1999). Academically based afterschool and extended-school-day programs, unlike child care programs, tend to have more of an academic focus.

In this book, academically based afterschool programs and extended-school-day programs share similar qualities and have similar goals. Those goals are usually mostly academic, with recreational, cultural, and social pro-

grams added to them. The reasons for providing academic services generally stem from the fact that many children, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, and gender tend to need additional help in academic work. Providing educational afterschool programs in a public setting provides students with credentialed teachers who can work with much smaller groups of children to improve their areas of academic weakness.

We choose to focus on academically based afterschool programs because we believe that many students need to have additional time to be involved in quality, enriching academic activities. Participation in school-based, academically oriented afterschool programs provides affordable and quality afterschool experiences for children who would not otherwise have access to such experiences. By focusing on academics, it is not the intent of this book to replicate the regular school-day experience but, rather, to provide some additional experiences that would otherwise not be available. These activities could include tutoring, academic enhancement, remediation, or other forms of academic support.

We acknowledge the existence of many different types of academically based afterschool programs, but very few have shown evidence of effectiveness, and this is what we choose to focus on initially. We are aware that some programs are in the process of collecting data on evidence of effectiveness, and we refer to evidence gathered by these programs as promising. We recognize the fact that not every single afterschool program has academic achievement at its core. For example, some community-based afterschool programs that provide services to a widespread number of students have been evaluated or have partnered with public schools. We include these programs in the community-based afterschool programs.

Finally, we include some programs that may not have been used in the afterschool programs but fulfill the needs of some (such as study skills programs) and could be adapted for use in afterschool settings. These programs have shown evidence of effectiveness during the regular school day. We expect this book to serve as a combination of theory, research, and practice for implementing effective afterschool programs for researchers, educators, practitioners, legislators, and any other groups interested in afterschool issues.

Afterschool Programs: Benefits and Challenges

Educators and policymakers have begun to show increasing interest in programs designed for use in the nonschool hours, especially those designated for afterschool (see, for example, Carnegie Corporation, 1989, 1992, 1994, 1995; Mott Foundation, 1999; Pederson, de Kanter, Bobo, Weinig, & Noeth, 1998; U.S. National Commission on Time and Learning, 1992, 1994). In recent years, a lot of emphasis has been placed on afterschool programs for

three primary reasons. First, attendance in afterschool programs can provide children with supervision during a time in which many might be exposed to, and engage in, more antisocial and destructive behaviors. Second, afterschool programs can provide enriching experiences that broaden children's perspectives and improve their socialization. Third, and a more recent emphasis, afterschool programs can perhaps help improve the academic achievement of students who are not achieving as well as they need to during regular school hours.

Many children do not receive adequate supervision during the afterschool hours (Schwartz, 1996; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1987). When the dismissal bell rings, many children go home to empty houses (latchkey children), and many others "hang out" on the streets until their parents return home. Children left unsupervised after school often fall prey to deviant behaviors that are harmful to them, to their schools, and to their communities (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Furby & Beyth-Marom, 1990; Galambos & Maggs, 1991; Steinberg, 1986). They are more likely to be involved in delinquent acts during these hours (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1997; Galambos & Maggs, 1991; Grossman & Garry, 1997; Schwartz, 1996). Numerous reports have documented that a high proportion of juvenile crimes are committed between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. each day, and these reports have created increased interest in strategies that will occupy students productively during these hours (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1997; Council of Chief State School Officers, 1987; Henderson, 1990; Jacoby, 1989; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999).

For children who face academic or behavioral obstacles to success during the school hours, the afterschool hours can be a time to attempt to eliminate these barriers and improve the education of the whole child. However, accomplishing this goal is not as easy as it may seem. Concern for what happens to school-age children during the afterschool hours is not a new topic of discussion (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1994; Marx, 1989, 1990; Morris, 1992; Morton-Young, 1995; Seligson, 1986, 1988; Seligson & Allenson, 1993; U.S. Department of Education, 1993). Many studies concerning this issue have been conducted over time, asking whether supervised care is better than nonsupervised care (Galambos & Maggs, 1991), exploring differences in types of afterschool arrangements (Vandell & Corasaniti, 1988; Vandell & Ramanan, 1991) and trying to find the best types of afterschool arrangements based on the needs of the family, the child, and the resources available.

In addition to providing supervision, afterschool and extended-school-day programs are now being seen as a means of improving academic achievement, providing opportunities for academic enrichment, and providing social, cultural, and recreational activities (Boyer, 1987; Burns, 1992; Campbell & Flaker, 1985; Fashola, 1998, 1999, in press; Halpern, 1992). Recently, Congress allocated $40 million to create 21st century afterschool, community

learning centers across the country, in hopes of improving the lives of children and the communities they live in during the nonschool hours, including after school and in the summer (U.S. Department of Education, 1997, 1999). In his 1998, 1999, and 2000 State of the Union addresses, President Bill Clinton substantially increased federal funding for 21st CCLC afterschool programs (Clinton, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000). In particular, extended-day and afterschool programs have been proposed as a means of accelerating the achievement of students placed at risk of academic failure due to poverty, lack of parental support, reduced opportunities to learn, and other socioeconomic and academic factors (Frymier & Gansneder, 1989; McAdoo & Crawford, 1988; McGillis, 1996).

Although the benefits to be derived from the use of the afterschool hours seem great, the most effective ways to capitalize on this opportunity are not well understood, and existing afterschool efforts vary enormously in purposes and in operations. They range from purely day care, to purely academic, to purely enrichment programs, to various mixtures of these. Also, their costs vary greatly, as some programs can be very expensive and may take resources that could be used more appropriately for other investments.

To identify effective strategies for students outside school hours, particularly for at-risk students, it is essential to know what types of extended-day programs and particularly what specific programs are most likely to lead to valued outcomes. However, this kind of research is very limited. In some studies (Engman, 1992; Henderson, 1990; Mercure, 1993; Milch, 1986), academically based afterschool programs have been loosely linked to improving some at-risk children's academic and social skills and work habits. But this body of literature largely studies the effects of afterschool programs as a whole rather than the effects of specific effective and replicable afterschool or extended-school-day models or programs.

The evaluation of afterschool programs can be challenging (Blanton, Mayer, & Shustack, 1995). There are few studies of the effects of specific afterschool programs, and those that exist have found highly inconsistent outcomes. Selection bias is a frequent problem, as students who voluntarily attend various afterschool programs may be different from those who do not choose to do so. Furthermore, the limited research has primarily involved middle-income, Caucasian students, making the results difficult to generalize to disadvantaged or minority children. Circumstances surrounding the type of care provided, the kinds of students who attended the different programs, and what the programs themselves entailed have rarely been studied in detail. Different studies have yielded different answers to different questions about different issues relating to afterschool child care.

In addition, afterschool programs and the regular school-day programs are not directly connected, so studying the effects of the afterschool program on regular school-day academics is difficult. Afterschool programs may exist in community centers, in clubs, or on school grounds, and they may serve students from many different schools.

Afterschool Programs and Their Functions

Before addressing the effects of programs that take place in the afterschool hours, it is important to define the various types of programs and their purposes. In this book, we distinguish between three different types of afterschool arrangements: day care, afterschool, and extended-school-day programs. Each of these types of programs addresses different issues and has different strengths.

Day Care Programs

Day care programs do not necessarily have an academic focus or goals (although some may); instead, they emphasize recreational and cultural activities. They are seldom aligned with academic instruction provided during the regular school day, although many do provide homework assistance. Although some day care programs may also have small academic components, the main goal of day care programs is to provide students whose parents are working or otherwise engaged with a safe haven. The period of operation for typical, afterschool, day care programs is between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., and the programs typically emphasize safety, a positive climate, and enjoyable cultural and recreational activities. Such programs primarily involve children from preschool to third grade. Licensing is required for day care program staff, and many also require child development associate degrees. A main distinguishing factor is that day care programs require licensing for the sites and the workers, whereas school-based afterschool programs do not necessarily require licensing, as they serve school-age children.

Afterschool Programs

Afterschool programs are more likely to involve school-age children only (ages 5 to 18) and emphasize academic as well as nonacademic activities. Compared to day care programs, afterschool programs are more likely to provide transportation, a wider variety of recreational programs, and increased child-to-adult ratios. These programs are usually more affordable than day care programs. Examples of afterschool programs include Boys & Girls Clubs, the YMCA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, some 4-H programs, ASPIRA (which in Spanish means aspiration), church programs, and municipal parks and recreation programs.

Some afterschool programs offer specialized activities, using professionals or qualified persons and volunteers to provide instruction in such areas as ballet, tap dancing, music, karate, and chess. These programs seek to help children make creative use of their free time. Students may enroll in these classes, or parents may enroll them, purely out of interest in the skills, not to satisfy any child care needs. The classes often provide progress information to the children and to the instructors through, for example, badges or promotions to higher ranks in the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, recitals in musical

classes, and tournaments in karate or chess classes. The classes provide children with opportunities to explore and develop skills, talents, and hobbies and, later, to show these skills to their parents and others. Academic achievement, attendance, or other school-related outcomes may or may not be primary or secondary goals of these programs.

School-Based, Academic, Extended-Day Programs

This type of program takes place during the same afterschool hours but differs from day care and afterschool programs in that it is directly connected to what takes place during the school day. Although day care and afterschool programs may or may not take place on the school grounds, the school-based, academic, extended-day program typically takes place inside the school building and provides a mixture of academic, recreational, and cultural programs. Regular school-day teachers and paraprofessionals are usually paid to stay at the school during the afterschool hours.

As noted in its name, this type of model has a main academic focus, and the goals, outcomes, and methods of academic instruction are directly related to and aligned with what happens during the day. Teachers conduct small-group or tutorial remedial classes, supervise homework clubs, and teach study skills and advanced or supplementary courses (e.g., a foreign language or an advanced science). In addition, paraprofessionals and community volunteers may provide cultural and recreational programs. Teachers may also supervise and train volunteers or paraprofessionals to provide academic or nonacademic services. Extended-school-day programs can be schoolwide or districtwide. They are rarely mandatory but may provide greater or lesser inducements for children to attend.

Some programs invite community members to their program planning sessions and include them as teachers for some of the classes and activities. These individuals may be associated with churches (e.g., Child First Authority), private and public corporations (e.g., Help One Student To Succeed), law enforcement agencies (e.g., Police Athletic League), parent groups (e.g., PTAs), businesses, members of the armed forces (e.g., On a Roll), and other groups. In some cases, they make the afterschool program a hub of community activity, and over time, the program and the school may begin to have a broad impact on the community.

One recent trend in some extended-day programs is the development of curricula tied to district, state, and national goals yet designed to be taught afterschool. Such programs may involve well-designed curricula, teacher training, and student assessments. These programs provide students with complete, well-tested approaches, resources, trainers, and so on, reducing the need for every school to reinvent the wheel. Some such programs seem promising, have been widely used, and have at least anecdotal indications of effectiveness in individual schools that have made gains. However, many have not been used with at-risk students and, although they may have been assessed for implementation and enjoyment, few have been evaluated for

achievement purposes using methods that would pass even the most minimal standards.

Focus and Methodology of the Review

The goal of this book is to examine current afterschool and extended-school-day programs, both to review the limited research on the effects of these programs on student achievement and to describe promising strategies that communities can use in partnership with schools to create effective afterschool programs for all children in elementary and secondary schools. It is implicit that all the programs mentioned have been used with at-risk students.

This book identifies and describes programs with an educational focus that have been shown to have evidence of effectiveness for all children during the nonschool hours. We also include some programs that have little evidence of effectiveness as yet but do have active dissemination and replicability materials that could be used by other afterschool programs. Not all the programs in this book were developed specifically for use after school. Some have been adapted for use during the afterschool hours, and others are adaptable. For programs that can be adapted for use during the nonschool hours, the evidence of effectiveness presented is usually not from use after school but from use as supplementary programs during the regular school day.

This book summarizes but does not examine in detail the benefits of different types of day care, which are presented in various other studies (see, for example, studies like Galambos & Maggs, 1991; Posner & Vandell, 1994; Seligson, 1988, 1986; Seligson & Allenson, 1993; Steinberg, 1986; Vandell & Corasaniti, 1988; Vandell & Ramanan, 1991). Ideally, this book would identify only programs that have strong evidence of effectiveness and of replicability based on use in afterschool academic settings, and these are the criteria used in our identification and description of the programs. As has been mentioned earlier, however, as this is a relatively new field of research, not many programs fully meet our criteria.

Effectiveness

Programs were considered to be effective if evaluations compared students who participated in the program to similar students, in matched comparison or control schools, and found the program students to perform significantly better on fair measures of academic performance. Such evaluations were required to demonstrate that experimental and control students were initially equivalent on measures of academic performance and socioeconomic status and on other measures and were similar in other ways. *Fair measures* were ones assessing the objectives pursued equally by experimental and control groups; for example, a curriculum-specific measure would be fair only if the control group implemented the same curriculum.

Many studies of innovative programs and evaluations compared gains made by program students on standardized tests, usually expressed in percentiles or normal curve equivalents (NCEs), to expected gains derived from national norming samples. This design, widely used in evaluation of Chapter 1/Title 1 programs, is prone to error and generally overstates program impacts (see Slavin & Madden, 1991). Programs evaluated using NCE gains or other alternatives to experimental-control comparisons are discussed as promising if their outcomes are particularly striking, but such data are not considered conclusive. We exclude after-the-fact comparisons of experimental and control groups after outcomes are known.

Replicability

The best evidence that a program is replicable in other sites is that it has been, in fact, replicated elsewhere, especially if there is evidence that the program was evaluated and found to be effective in sites beyond its initial pilot locations. The existence of an active dissemination effort is also a strong indication of replicability. Programs are considered low in replicability if they have been used in a small number of schools and appear to depend on conditions (e.g., charismatic principals, magnet schools, extraordinary resources) unlikely to exist on a significant scale elsewhere.

Literature Search Procedures

The broadest possible search was carried out for programs that had been evaluated and that applied to students in afterschool settings. Some of the sources of information for this review were the National Diffusion Network (NDN), Educational Resources Information Centers (ERIC), education journals, conferences attended, and personal communications. The NDN was a part of the U.S. Department of Education until the network's end in 1996. A Joint Dissemination Review Panel (JDRP), later called the Program Effectiveness Panel (PEP), identified promising programs that had evidence of evaluation and possible effectiveness, and these programs then qualified for dissemination through the NDN. Evaluation requirements for these programs were not rigorous, however, and many of the evaluations looked only at pre-post and NCE gains as evidence of effectiveness.

Effect Sizes

Evidence of effectiveness in this review is reported in the form of effect sizes or NCEs. An *effect size* is the proportion of a standard deviation by which an experimental group exceeds a control group. To give a sense of scale, an effect size of + 1.0 would be equivalent to 100 points on the Stanford Achievement Test scale, 2 stanines, 15 IQ points, or about 21 NCEs (Fashola & Slavin, 1998b). In general, an effect size of + 0.25 or more would be considered educationally significant.

Types of Programs and Their Evaluations

Thirty-four programs met the inclusion criteria stated in this book. Programs included fell into one of four major categories. The first category includes programs that address a specific academic component of the curriculum—language arts. Programs in this category are regularly used as supplements to the regular school-day program but have been used during the nonschool hours. The second category consists of afterschool programs that address other specific areas of the curriculum, such as science or computer technology. This category also includes specific for-profit programs developed as enrichment programs specifically for use after school. The third category includes tutoring programs aimed at improving reading. These differ from the programs in the first category primarily because many of these programs are one-on-one tutoring programs. Some are adaptable for use in afterschool settings, and some are not. This category also includes study skills programs. These programs influence all areas of the curriculum but focus mainly on teaching study and comprehension skills to low achievers. The fourth category consists of community-based afterschool programs. These programs are not necessarily academic in nature but are sometimes located in schools and sometimes operated as community-based and community-owned programs. In addition to these four types, we include programs that could serve as add-on cultural and recreational components of afterschool or extended-school-day programs, as this is an important part of afterschool developments and activities.

The following chapters describe some of the most widely used afterschool and extended-day programs. We present the current state of the evidence, if any, and the apparent replicability of the model, especially with students placed at risk. In searching for evaluations and evidence of effectiveness, we emphasized studies that used experimental and control groups that were evaluated on appropriate measures of achievement and other outcomes. The study included well-matched treatment and comparison groups that were also evaluated using the same measures. All the programs described in this book are used in schools, except for some of the community-based programs.